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Women Returning to Work

Canada



Appendix to Creative Job
Search Techniques

1982



Employment and
Immigration Canada

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Immigration Canada

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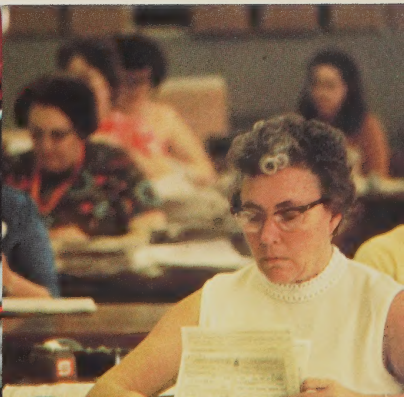
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Women today make up about forty-one per cent of all workers in the labour market.

It is estimated that in a few years this proportion will reach fifty per cent, that is, half of all workers in Canada.

This includes women who have left the labour force for a time and have now decided to return to paid employment; their reasons for so doing, are varied:

- inflation is taking a bigger bite out of the family income every day
- a mother finds she has more free time because the children are well established in school
- an opportunity arises for a woman to return to a job she held before
- the challenge of a new career is appealing after a number of years devoted to family activities
- jobs are now accessible that open new horizons for women



New doors are opening

Increasingly, new opportunities are opening for women on the labour market. Jobs formerly closed to them are now within their reach. Women are admitted into the previously staunchest male strongholds: the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Police Forces. We also find women working as technicians, heavy equipment operators, in automobile sales and construction work, as managers, computer programmers, tool & die makers, and mechanical drafts persons. More and more women are entering the professions, as barriers which formerly hindered or prevented their entry and subsequent advancement are being progressively removed. Times have changed and woman's role has expanded. It is every woman's right to decide in what direction she wishes to seek her personal, social and economic fulfillment.



You are not alone

If you are looking for a job that will put you back in the labour market, remember you are neither the first nor the last woman to be in this position. Employers have developed confidence in re-entry women because they usually have:

- organizational skills
- a strong sense of responsibility
- a strong motivation to find and maintain employment

Despite the valuable skills and experiences women have acquired while away from the labour market, many are still unsure how to re-enter the paid labour force:

- they may lack self-confidence
- they may not know how to sell their qualifications
- they may feel inferior to other people who already have a permanent job
- they may not know how or where to look for employment
- they may be afraid they will not measure up to new work demands

It is mainly for these people that the Creative Job Search Techniques in this booklet were designed.



Something you can do

In order to make the most of the Creative Job Search Techniques sessions, you must do the same as everyone else who is looking for a job:

- analyse your skills, aptitudes and interests
- make a survey of the labour market and an inventory of the employers in your community
- write your résumé
- prepare yourself for an interview with an employer

First step: get ready!

Once you have looked around and become aware of the possibilities available to you, start thinking and discussing with your family the changes in routines that will be required once you have begun your new career.

You have probably already thought about child care arrangements, the cost of transportation and meals, and the overall investment you will have to make in terms of money and time.



What type of work would you like to do?

It is now time to decide what kind of work you would like to do. Take this opportunity to strike the best compromise between your family obligations and your desire to go back to work. Ask yourself whether you want to work

- at home
- outside the home
- in an office
- in a factory
- in a store
- for a small company or a large company
- in a small town or a large city
- during the day, in the evening or at night
- on shifts
- alone or in a team
- full time or part time
- on contract, on commission or for wages
- on a free-lance basis or self-employed

It is important to think about these questions. No one can decide for you and you will avoid problems if you have considered the implications of each early on in your planning.



Getting to know yourself

It is also important to identify your talents, inclinations, aptitudes, tastes and experience. This is a useful personal assessment that will teach you more about yourself and will help you determine what kind of job would be best for you.

Here are a few questions and answers that could show the way to interesting and accessible jobs.

Can you exercise diplomacy and tact in relations with others?

Do you like having professional relationships with people?

Do you like varied work and frequent change?

Do you have initiative and energy?

Do you have an eye for detail?

If so, you might be interested in working in: advertising services or as one of the following:

- office equipment salesperson
- sales clerk in a bookstore
- public relations officer
- computer specialist.



Do you like activities in which technology and machines are more important than the human factor?
Do you like routine, concrete and structured work?
Do you like precision work according to established norms?
If so, an electronics firm in your area may be looking for assemblers.

Are you good at deciphering handwriting?
Are you energetic and methodical?
Can you work outdoors in any weather?
If so, your post office may be looking for letter carriers.

Are you concerned about your appearance?
Do you keep yourself very well groomed?
Do you know all about the various beauty products, household appliances and cleaning products on the market?
Many firms are looking for women such as you to advertise, demonstrate, publicize or sell their products, and they usually demand women who are well groomed and knowledgeable.
Obviously, you must be realistic. Some jobs require special training and should be given serious thought only if you already possess the required qualifications or are willing to consider retraining.



Experience counts too

Many women who return to the labour market do not mention previous work experience because they are afraid that it is outdated and do not mention their experience as a homemaker because they think it has no relevance to the labour market. They are wrong: experience does count. It may have been acquired through any of the following ways:

- paid work
- volunteer or unpaid work
- courses taken
- leisure activities.



Paid work

- Have you ever been a census taker or an enumerator for school board, municipal, provincial or federal elections in your neighbourhood?
- Have you ever worked a few hours a week driving children, senior citizens or handicapped persons for a social service agency?
- Have you ever given lessons (sewing, interior decoration, painting, handicrafts, dancing, music, swimming or skiing) in your home, for the school board or elsewhere?
- Have you ever worked on an Opportunities for Youth or Local Initiatives Program project in your area?





REMEMBER! YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

There are many women just like you planning to re-enter the labour force. Get to know each other. Job hunting becomes easier with the support of others.

- Meet with a friend who is also searching for employment.
- Attend the CJST session offered at your local Canada Employment Centre; keep in touch with those you meet during the session.
- Join a community group concerned with women and employment. Information on such groups is available from the CEC or the telephone directory.

The experience of other women can be very valuable to you, just as your experience will prove valuable to them.



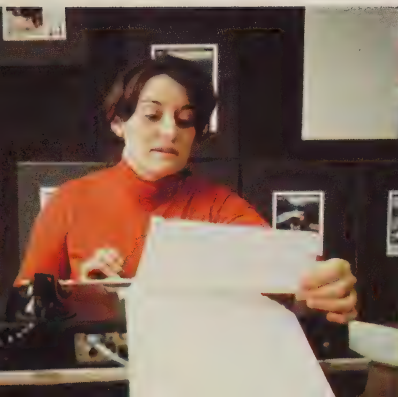
Volunteer or Unpaid Work

- Have you devoted hours of your time to caring for, playing with or bringing up children?
- Have you taken part in charitable work or perhaps organized religious, educational or political groups, nurseries or other community activities (Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, 4H, summer camp) or associations?
- Have you ever been in charge of a group of persons within an organization?
- And what about your everyday tasks; the care of children, preparing meals, budgeting, financial consultations, home repair and renovations, scheduling of family activities? — all that is unpaid or “volunteer” work, and it counts, too!



*Courses you have taken
and knowledge you have
acquired*

- Have you taken second language courses?
- Have you taken courses in childhood education?
- Have you taken driving lessons?
- Have you taken courses in home or car repair?
- Have you taken other courses for general education or personal improvement?
- What equipment do you know how to operate?
Typewriter, kitchen appliances, hand or power tools, cash register,
telephone switchboard, tape recorder, slide projector, movie camera,
car, photocopying machine, farm machinery?



Your leisure activities

- Have you ever served on the board of a co-operative, a cultural organization, or any other group or association?
- Have you ever held a position of responsibility with a recreational organization or a community centre?
- Did you ever help found a children's play group or a net working group?

All this is experience and it counts when you are looking for a job. Have you ever stopped to think about the number of different things you do in a few hours in the course of a single day?

These facts can have a positive impact on employers who are trying to fill positions in their companies.



A few hours in your day

The following example illustrates a few of the many jobs that a homemaker performs in the course of a single day. By analysing these everyday tasks you can quickly identify various essential qualifications and aptitudes that can be applied to an occupation on the labour market. With a little effort on your part, you can discover many other qualifications and aptitudes in a homemaker's daily work that can be used in a job on the labour market.

Take the time to analyse yourself and the various jobs you do around the house.

You will be surprised at what you can find.

Jobs

- It is 7:00 A.M. You wake the children for school. You make the family's breakfast.
- After the children leave for school, you quickly do a small load of laundry while you make the beds and jot down your weekly shopping list. You prepare a light meal for the members of the family who will be coming home for lunch, and you go out to do some errands. You stop by the bank, the cleaner's, the drugstore and the corner hardware store. You get back just as the children are coming home for lunch.
- You serve lunch and grab a bite to eat between two more loads of laundry. You have to re sew the button on Sylvie's overalls.
- After lunch, you do a little cleaning up in the kitchen, the living room and the bathroom before straightening out the community association's finances. A little later, you fold clothes and iron a few items and then resume recovering your kitchen chairs which were in bad shape.
- It is now 4:00 P.M. and the children are home from school. You prepare supper and let the children go outside to play before they start their homework.
- You put supper on while the children come in and begin their homework. You help them with their assignments, give them dictation, tell them where to get information, listen to them read — in short, you become the house tutor.
- You set the table. Your husband comes home from work. You tell him what happened during the day and discuss your plans for the weekend.
- The family sits down to supper. After supper, you and your husband relax for a few minutes while the children tidy up and do the dishes. A little later you put the children to bed and, while you watch the news on television, you pick up some sewing you had begun earlier.

Qualifications

- Sense of responsibility
- Punctuality
- Judgment
- Knowledge of nutrition
- Sense of organization
- Planning
- Sense of administration
- Thinking ahead
- Purchasing, selecting
- Comparison shopping
- Scheduling
- Skill at coping with an emergency situation
- Concern for cleanliness and neatness
- Knowledge of accounting, banking
- Skill at performing various kinds of manual work
- Thriftiness
- Ability to make decisions
- Ability to guide children
- General knowledge
- Patience
- Skill at dialogue
- Skill at summarizing and reporting facts
- Concern for being well-informed

Now that you know what your possibilities are, you must learn to make the most of this potential. The best way is to write a *résumé*.

*Your résumé and the job
application form*

Your résumé is a tool that will tell employers about you, about your talents and about your experience, and help them to decide whether they need a person with your qualifications. Remember: the job does not necessarily go to the most qualified person, but rather to the person who, while qualified, is in the right place at the right time and knows how to put this to advantage.

See the Creative Job Search Techniques Manual (CJST is 1-2-3, page 29) to find out how to complete a job application and how to write your résumé.



Sample of an introductory letter

Miss Carol DeCoff
Chief of Personnel
Orleans Community Centre
300 Olympic Street
ORLEANS, Ontario
K2P 3Z9

Dear Miss DeCoff:

My experience over the past eighteen years prompts me to apply for a job as a community worker within your organization.

I feel that I have the necessary skills for this type of work. I have fairly extensive knowledge of child and adolescent psychology and some notion of gerontology. The community work seminars in which I took part would also be highly useful. I have had the opportunity to lead several groups and I took part in setting up a food cooperative. My experience on the recreation committee is another of my assets.

Through these activities I found that I enjoy challenges and working as part of a team, that I can communicate easily with others and that I take satisfaction in testing my creativity.

Raising two children has taught me resourcefulness, initiative, firmness and kindness, all of which I consider important for a good community worker. Enclosed is a résumé of my professional background.

I would be happy to meet with you at your convenience. You may contact me at the following number 379-19 . . .

Att.

Yours very truly,

Fran Davies
810 Elgin Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1V 9P8

A sample résumé

Name: Fran Davies

Address: 810 Elgin Street
OTTAWA, Ontario
K1V 9P8

Telephone: (613) 379-19____

Personal data:

Citizenship: English Canadian
SIN: 000-000-000
Language Spoken: English (very well)
Language Written: English (well)
Driver's Licence: E 3606 061242-0 (Class G)

Career objective:

I would like to do community work. Working with young people or the elderly would correspond to my skills.

Work Experience:

1974	Local Initiatives Project Duty: To promote a food cooperative in the Orleans neighbourhood.
1965-1967	Reitman's Inc. Sparks Street Ottawa, Ontario Position: Manager - in charge of three employees.
1960-1965	Zeller's Stores Ltd. Sparks Street Ottawa, Ontario Position: Salesperson

Experience in the home:

I have been married since 1966 and have two children. My many daily tasks permitted me to learn to understand young people, develop their sense of responsibility, and take part in their recreational activities. My experience in the home has sharpened my sense of organization and ability to work with people.

Education:

- 1978 (New Start), Queen Elizabeth High School - Ottawa (night course).
- 1977 Human Development, Queen Elizabeth High School - Ottawa (night course).
- 1976 Human Relations, St. George High School - Ottawa (night course).
- 1975 Social Psychology, Queen Elizabeth High School - Ottawa (night course).
- 1974 Community Work Seminar, given by the Royal Bank - Ottawa (1 week).
- 1968 Adolescent Psychology, St. Pat's High School - Ottawa (night course).
- 1967 Child Psychology, St. Pat's High School - Ottawa (night course).
- 1956-1960 Secondary School, General, Grade 11, June 1960, St. Pat's High School - Ottawa
- 1949-1956 Elementary School - St. Catherine's School - Ottawa

Activities:

- 1977 Co-Editor of Women's Living
- 1975 Ottawa Food Cooperative Committee Member
- 1973-1974 Secretary of St-Catherine's Parish recreation committee

Interests:

Swimming, cross-country and downhill skiing, dance, popular music, cinema, public affairs programs on radio and television.

Special aptitudes and interests:

- ability to communicate easily with others
- ability to meet challenges and be creative
- ability to work as part of a team
- marked interest in working with people (young and elderly)

References:

Robert Smith, President
Orleans Food Cooperative
376 Shaw Avenue
Orleans, Ontario
Telephone: 379-89...

Leo White, Teacher
English Department
Queen Elizabeth High School
8 Queensway Street
Ottawa, Ontario
Telephone: 731-45...

Gloria Spencer, Chairperson
Recreation Committee
St-Catherine's Parish
10 - 5th Avenue
Orleans, Ontario
Telephone: 379-10...

The interview with the employer

You will be called for an interview and that is where the real test will come. You are not quite sure how to act? There are a few things you should be aware of, for example:

- There are still some employers who will try to find out some very personal information. They will ask you, for example, whether you are still living with your husband, whether you get along well with him, whether you plan to have any more children, whether you plan to get a babysitter for your children while you are at work, and so on.
- You are under no obligation to answer these personal questions. Your personal life is of no concern to anyone but yourself, and the employers must understand this. Politely and tactfully point out to them that these matters do not relate to the job.

To better prepare yourself for the interview, again see the Creative Job Search Techniques Manual (CJST is 1-2-3, page 43) — and go to it! The door to the labour market is wide open. If you need advice, do not hesitate to see your employment counsellor: S/he is there to help you on your way back to work.

